
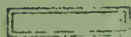


Ballads of  

Bush Life

And :: ::

Lyrics of Cheer

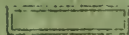


BY 

JOHN MATHEW

Author of "Eaglehawk and Crow," "Australian Echoes,"

"Two Representative Tribes of Australia," &c.



MELVILLE & MULLEN
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1914



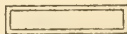
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LOS ANGELES

To Mr. J. Howlett Ross
with the Author's Compts.

Ballads of ❖ ❖ The Manse, Coburg,
18th Jan. 1915.
Bush Life

And :: ::

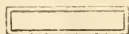
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TO MY WIFE.

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THE RAID.

When shearing we had done
And mustering begun,
We found the cattle wild as kangaroos ;
It was the bunya time,
Of all the year the prime
For niggers, who came round in starving crews.

They feasted and they fought,
They hunted and they caught
The kangaroos and bandicoots and 'possums,
Corroborees at night
They held with wild delight
And hugged their greasy Maries to their bosoms.

Their loud un-Christian din,
The odour from their skin,
The scent of smoke and blood and roasting beasts
The cattle fled, to seek
A refuge down the creek,
And some were speared, we knew, to crown the feasts.

Said Jim " We must go out
And put the host to rout
And make a jolly bonfire of their traps,
And give the naked sinners
That kill our beasts for dinners
Some mustard, and the crows will pick the scraps."

We came on them so quick,
Tom Tracker, who was sick,
Too weak to run, too much afraid to halt,
Took shelter up a tree,
We gave him two or three
Discharges from our muskets crammed with salt.

The clicking of the triggers
Dispersed the camp of niggers,
They never looked behind nor tried to pass ;
'Twas fun to see the ginnies
Snatch up the picaninnies
And scamper through the bush across the grass.

Old Kahmi with a vine
A gum tree did entwine,
And sprang aloft like sailor up the shrouds ;
When perched among the branches
We scarce could see her haunches
Along our barrels gazing toward the clouds.

Invulnerable wizards
The bite still in their gizzards—
Who boast that they can vanish underground—
Their magic went to pot,
At sound of musket shot
They bolted first and foremost with a bound.

So struck were all with fear
They never cast a spear
But bounced like paddimelons to the scrub
As lightly as the wind,
Their chattels left behind,
The ornaments and weapons ay and grub.

Their boombies¹ full of bunyas,
 The bark that formed their gunyahs²
 And all their prized accoutrements of war,
 Their saucy-fellow* dillies*
 And sugarbag³ and billies,⁴
 Their shells and reeds and rugs and other store,

We gathered in a heap,
 And they might watch and weep,
 But we with jubilation lit the pyre
 And never left the place
 Until we saw no trace
 Of treasure save the ashes of the fire.

It did not seem such fun
 When all the work was done,
 Oh how I rued the raid when known the cost;
 Like Jephthah with his slaughter
 I had sacrificed my daughter,
 For wandering forth to meet us she was lost.

It was my darling Nancy,
 The idol of my fancy,
 Who now did frantic stray in baby shoes,
 And only little Benben
 And the one-eyed old man Twenben
 To tell a human track from kangaroo's.

I cursed my crazy folly
 That found a pastime jolly
 Dispersing those who now had been my friends,
 And cried "O Tracker Tommy,
 Now fled in terror from me,
 I'd give you half my herd to make amends."

(1) Bags (2) Bark Shelters. ** Dangerous Wallets (containing apparatus of sorcery) (3) Native Honey. (4) Cans.

THE RAID

Two days we searched in vain
Across the ridge and plain,
The footsteps found and traced and lost for aye,
My reason was distraught,
With worst forboding fraught,
When hark! we heard a cooey far away.

Said Benben "That's the Tracker,
I know he's bringing back her
His cooey means that everything is right."
The news of her salvation
Was such a declaration
I scarce believed my ears or trusted sight.

I darted through the space
Between me and her face,
Despair and hope in turn my heart did stir,
And when I did behold her
Astride on Tommy's shoulder,
I felt I must embrace both him and her.

Departed were her fears
And wiped her bitter tears.
I took her from the shoulders of her nag;
My heart sent up a prayer,
I kissed with rapture rare
Her lips all plastered o'er with sugarbag.

Oh how I loved that nigger,
That dirty, smelling jigger,
I put my arms around him with delight,
And when we reached the station
I gave him a collation
And said, in tones that fail me to recite,

“Go gather all your brothers,
Your sisters, dads and mothers,
The remnants of the Baiyambara clan,
We'll sacrifice a bullock
And serve it free as mullock,
Though black you are a thorough gentleman.”

Oh high was my regard,
But how could I reward?
For gold was no account to such a one.
I gave him life-long pension,
A plate with grateful mention.
And him and his the freedom of the run.

The plate had this inscription,
For everyone's perception,
“THIS TOMMY IS A TRACKER OF RENOWN
AND KING OF MANUMBAR,
A BETTER MAN BY FAR
THAN MANY SQUATTERS THOUGH HIS
SKIN IS BROWN.”

THE BLACK HERO.

Voices chattering, footsteps pattering,
 Fetters clanking, horses' tread,
 On the dim track toward Port Darwin,
 Northward thus the travellers sped.

Sight unwonted question-raising,
 Sight pathetic causing pain,
 Why the horseman slowly riding,
 Driving on the native train ?

Nature's children charged with plunder
 And with murder of a white,
 Captured by a daring trooper,
 Marched by day and watched by night ;

Tramping neath unbroken sunshine
 O'er the rough and burning ground,
 With no covering from the night-dew
 Wheresoe'er their camp was found.

Now they reach the Katherine River—
 Swollen with the recent rains,
 And the blacks must ford or swim it,
 Handcuffed, hampered with their chains,

And the trooper single-handed,
 Must his sable charges steer,
 All unknown new channels hollowed
 By the water's swift career:

Cautious wading, stoutly swimming,
Shoulder to shoulder the natives keep ;
Fearlessly the horseman follows
Till the water grows so deep
That his horse can foot no bottom
But begins to rear in fright ;
Whirling downward with the torrent,
Rider thrown and lost to sight.

Now the blacks are safely landed
And their captor left behind
Rolling log-like in the river ;
They, enfranchised as the wind,
Free to mock, evade Port Darwin
And their native wild regain,
Free to gloat upon the trooper
Stunned and bleeding, thrilled with pain.

But humanity is stronger
Than the wish arrest to flee,
Neighbour, though a fettered black man,
Cannot run from agony,

Deftly fastens up his fetters
Lest they should his strokes impede,
Plunges headlong in the river
Knowing not how brave the deed.

Now the captive catches captor,
Bears him bravely to the bank
From the deadly-coiling waters,
From the deeps wherein he sank.

Then the blacks their best endeavour
To restore the seeming drowned,
And rejoice to hear his breathing,
As if brother lost were found.

Some run far for white assistance,
Some are chafing hands and feet,
And ere help comes from the distance
Restoration is complete.

Hung with chains the natives did it,
Hung with chains resumed their way,
Hung with chains they dwelt in Darwin,
Until justice had its say.

Guiltless all ! the verdict spoken !
—All the toil and risk for nought—
Surely poor return for hardship,
Freedom much too dearly bought.

Nay 'twas worth the toil and danger
To reveal the native heart.
How it yearned to save the stranger,
How it played the hero part.

Neighbour ! hero we acclaim thee !
Neighbour ! (faithful to thy name,)
Royal medal decks thy bosom
And the bard embalms thy fame.

THE LOST BOY.

(An Australian Legend)

Where fern and wattle fringe the creek
The children played at hide and seek,
The ones concealed would whistle low,
A sign to search the rest would know.
They romped until the light expired,
Then weary to the camp retired,
All but one boy, a gentle child,
The Muthar spirit off had wiled.

The search in earnest then began,
The blacks through every corner ran
Of sylvan hill and tufted plain,
But all their searching was in vain.
They begged the mighty wizard's aid
Whose art oft rendered them afraid.
He cast his piercing gaze on high,
He heard a chant above a cry

“ Dear laddie hush, and dry your tears,
In my bright land there are no fears,
It is the home of peace and joy
Where nought can harm you or annoy.’

On airy wings aloft he flew,
The fleeting pair did swift pursue
By meteor red and silver star
Unto the Muthar realm afar.

The boy, confined in rocky cave,
No earthly power could reach or save.
The wizard sadly turned away
And only brought the soothing lay

“ Dear laddie hush, and dry your tears,
In my bright land there are no fears,
It is the home of peace and joy
Where nought can harm you or annoy.”

Now sometimes at the twilight hush,
When eerie visions haunt the bush,
The little children crouch in fear
Lest sprites who kidnap should come near.
They whisper o'er a potent charm
And clutch their fathers by the arm
Then hear they faintly from the sky
A Muthar's chant above a cry

“ Dear laddie hush, and dry your tears,
In my bright land there are no fears,
It is the home of peace and joy
Where nought can harm you or annoy.”

MYAL CREEK.

Though dreamy winds the Myal Creek
 Its murmurs seldom cease,
 A choicer spot is far to seek,
 Its woodland sounds and vistas speak
 Of loveliness and peace.

The scene is fair as might befit
 A new-born Paradise
 Where serpent's fang has never bit,
 Nor strife nor sorrow ever lit
 Nor any cruel device.

But hark! the tramp of horse's foot,
 The jar of voices rude
 That fright the mild marsupial brute,
 The curse and jesting that pollute
 The heavenly quietude.

A gang across the rise appeared
 Forbidding, fierce to view ;
 Because the stock were scared and speared
 They came to make the blacks afeared,
 Their hands in blood to imbrue.

See where the creek like gentle arm
 A pleasant knoll enfolds,
 There stands a hut in sunshine warm
 The natives ne'er attempt to harm.
 Which single watchman holds;

A hut of slab, with bark for roof
And loopholes for defence,
Enough that it to spear was proof,
And yet the blacks kept not aloof
Nor yet were hunted thence.

The shepherds led their flocks away,
The stockmen ranged the run,
Returning at the gloaming grey;
Geordie remained alone by day,
Most men his lot would shun.

Alone so far as white men went,
But natives tried and sure
Made less the lonely dreariment,
And came and went save one—content
To bide his paramour.

This day a clan has clustered here
And pitched their simple camp,
They move around without a fear
Until that din doth start the ear—
The shouts and horses' tramp

The harmless creatures trustful stayed;
Alas! why fled they not?
The riders with them wanton played
And made the boldest hearts dismayed
By outrage on them wrought.

“The dark and devilish plot you plan
I'll not be tangled in,”
Said Geordie, and he swore a ban
“By God you leave the poor old man
And touch you not this gin.”

“ Now stop your jaw or else be civil,”
The leader savage said,
“ Or in a trice my gun I level
And send you shuddering to the devil,
No stories tell the dead.”

In vain he cursed and begged them spare
Old Bob threescore and ten,
The gin alone they left him there,
The other wives were doomed to share
The tortures of their men.

The blacks were mustered—age unspared—
They roped them round the neck,
And dragged and drove them wondering, scared,
The muskets barking if they dared
Attempt to back or break.

The horsemen forced their captives tied
Two dreary miles away ;
The children by their mother's side
Now toddled mute, now sobbed and cried—
To mourning turned their play.

They reached a gently-swelling mound
Concealed in bushy glade,
And there a fallen tree was found—
Its branches scattered all around
That famous firewood made.

They halted and the muskets rang,
The natives madly strained,
But still the slaughtering shots went bang,
Reverberated far their clang,
The grass with blood was stained.

The friendly Geordie heard the din,
Surmised the shameful play,
And though he recked but light of sin
His ire was hot, he groaned within
And swore he'd make them pay.

The women wept and wailed, amazed,
And hugged the bleeding men,
But even at them the miscreants blazed ;
They fled, but halting, helpless, dazed,
To die crept back again.

The piccaninnies all distraught
Did hither and thither run,
The sportsmen by the hair them caught
They would not powder waste on naught
So felled them with the gun.

They mocked the victims as they bled,
They mimicked shrieks and wails,
And fiendish gloated o'er the dead
And laughed and coarsely jesting said
"The cinders tell no tales."

They heaped the corpses on the wood,
They lit the funeral pyre.
The sweet air of the solitude
With smoke and odour was imbued
Unhallowed from that fire.

And now the cowardly crime is done
The murderers ride away,
As jubilant at setting sun
As soldiers who had victory won—
As if 'twere sport to slay.

And up to heaven as they retire
 There rolls the dreadful reek—
Foul incense of the hellish fire
That cries to God for vengeance dire
 From outraged Myal Creek.

But ere a week had passed away
 Two travellers thither rode,
And saw with horror and dismay
The traces of that dreadful day—
 The ground with bones bestrowed.

And soon the seven in crime combined
 Were haled to Sydney town ;
By justice strong, by justice blind
Were in the prison cells confined—
 The captives of the crown.

The squatters sought to save in vain,
 Their praise could not annul
The tale that Geordie told so plain,
The witness of the travellers twain
 And Bob's peculiar skull.

Then Sydney saw an awful sight
 At early morning's chime,
Seven culprits mount the gallows' height
And hang in death (though they were white,)
 To expiate their crime.

THE STATION REVISITED

A LAPSE of summers intervenes,
 And far my feet have wandered,
 Since last I gazed upon the scenes
 Where youthful hours were squandered.
 Again I view the bosky range
 That backs the station dwelling,
 And nearer, undisguised by change,
 The lesser ridges swelling.

The bunya, whose colossal form
 Was landmark ever vernal,
 Still rears its front and stands the storm
 As if it were eternal.
 The camp was there by troopers scared,
 The jaws of death were yawning,
 Nor age nor innocence was spared,
 It was a dreadful dawning.

I see some cattle at the yard,
 I smell the scent of branding,
 And visions stirring fond regard
 Come to me where I'm standing,—
 The sweat, the dust, the shouts, the blare,
 The charging and the crushing ;
 The all-absorbed, unconscious air
 At once to memory rushing.

Oh, well I know the lawny knoll
 With honeysuckles crested,
Where Charlie wished his hoary poll
 Should at the last be rested.
The fence about his narrow bed
 Is now or burnt or rotten ;
The kine are sporting o'er his head,
 Whose memory is forgotten.

This morning as I rambled round
 The old familiar places,
Dismantled huts and folds I found,
 And wrack and ruin traces.
Lagoons were sleeping in the sun,
 With lilies on their bosoms,
And birds their revels held upon
 The branches and the blossoms.

But all the choicest land is left
 From those who own the station ;
The run with road and fence is cleft,
 To me like desecration.
The loved romantic postal route,
 No use to try retracing ;
Unless prepared to go on foot,
 Or do some steeple-chasing.

Where shepherds gave the flocks their fling,
 And followed with their collies,
And lusty beeves did stray and string,
 Or flee the stock-whip volleys,
The station stock in paddocks browse
 The care of boundary riders ;
And fences check the milking cows
 Of settlers once outsiders.

New homes are reared upon the creeks,
New voices in them mingle,
And cheerily the chimney reeks
Though lonely be the dingle.
But much that is beloved is marred
By ruthless Time's abrasion,
And Nature's virgin face is scarred
By pestilent invasion.

I would not grudge nor herds nor lands
To venturesome newcomers,
Nor houses once in other hands
For half a hundred summers.
But still I feel the jealous smart
Of lover to a rival ;
The pang when charms of youth depart
That ne'er will know revival.

I rode across the Moomba flat
Where tribes of yore did battle,
I saw but a marsupial rat,
And quiet crawling cattle.
Above me in the boughs I saw
The parrot's plumage gleaming,
I heard the noisy raven's caw,
And cockatoo's shrill screaming.

How changed from when the weird and wild
Corroboree resounded,
When warriors on the march defiled,
And hunters lightly bounded.
Then coeys echoed through the glade,
And liling cheered the gunyahs,
Where elders squatted, children played
And women roasted bunvas.

Of life primeval and intense
Remains no vestige human,
The civilizing influence
Has wiped out man and woman.
Like fallen leaves the tribes were strewn
By agencies inglorious,
Insidiously the seed was sown,
And vice came off victorious.

The scrub is thriving on the fells,
The wawoon's* fairy bower,
The creeks are gliding down the dells
Where wattles are in flower ;
The cedar still adorns the range,
The bracken decks the meadow,
The sunshine here has little change,
But oh ! my heart's in shadow.

The charm of other days is flown,
The friendship, the affection ;
I feel deserted and alone
Through loving retrospection.
My heart's oppressed with vain regret,
I care not long to linger
Where such relentless marks are met
Of Time's destroying finger.

* *Wawoon* = the Scrub Turkey

THE LAUGHING JACKASS

The sun has only paled the sky
 And snowy mists the gullies fill,
 And not a leaf nor blade is dry,
 The air is clear and fresh and still ;
 In northern lands the lightsome lark
 To greet the dawning sings and soars,
 But here a jocund bawler roars,
 His merry-making music, hark !

One clears his throat, krrr ka-ka-ka,
 Another answers, ku-ku-ku :
 United then, a merry crew,
 Ka-ka ka-ka, ka-ka ka-ka,
 Ku-ku ku-ku, ku-ku ku-ku,
 Ka-ku ka-ku ka-ku ka-ku.

The sheep are rising in the fold,
 The dingo slinking to his lair,
 The highest hills are tipped with gold,
 There's gentle motion in the air.
 And from the shepherd's roof of bark
 A wreath of smoke ascending see,
 And from a naked gnarly tree
 A burst of wildwood laughter mark.

As sober these ka-guran* look,
 As sleepy, sluggish, sullen, staid.
 As if all gladness had forsook
 Their heavy form in brown arrayed,

One moment they are grave and stark.
The next convulsed with loud guffaw,
And clusters here and there, ha-ha,
Enlivening all the Austral park.

On smoky days, at drowsy noon,
They drown the dull cicada whir,
The sun retreats to that same tune
Which was his early harbinger.
When lowering clouds their load debark
And let the blue peep through the rift,
Their harsh but happy voice they lift
And gladden like the radiant arc.

I love to hear their laughter ring,
I feel a partner in their glee,
A comrade with them on the wing
Through balmy Austral forest free.
From all this world's corroding cark
A respite glad their voice doth bring,
Suggesting cause to laugh and sing
When spirits droop and days are dark.

* One of the native names for the Laughing Jackass ;
it means literally beak-long.

TILPA

(Based on Fact)

There she stands—a damsel sable
Perched upon the ridge and gable
Of her guardian master's stable—

And at distant hills she peers,
Where the bluish smoke is drifting
She is watching through the rifting
Figures, dusky figures shifting,

That revive the vanished years.

And upon the zephyrs laden
With the perfumes far conveyed in
Austral balmy bush, the maiden

Old familiar voices hears,
On the breezes rising, falling,
Whispers tender, lusty bawling
Tilpa! Tilpa! calling, calling,
Waking hopes, suggesting fears.

Down she clambered, off she darted,
Slipping, slinking, anxious-hearted,
And when daylight had departed,

She approached the distant fires,
Not the playmates of her childhood—
Dryads of the Queensland wildwood—
But the farmers burning piled wood
She discerns and sad retires.

Disappointed, and not daring
To approach the bonfires flaring,
To reveal her quest not caring,
 Fancy's phantoms she pursued,
Northward, ever northward hasted,
Seeking joys for long untasted,
Over ranges bush-fire wasted,
 Through the scrub-land unsubdued.
On the breezes rising, falling,
Whispers tender, lusty bawling,
Tilpa ! Tilpa ! calling, calling,
 Through the trackless forest wooed.

Far from town and homestead hurrying,
Over height and hollow scurrying,
Swimming swollen creek unflurrying,
 Rarely sought she sleep or rest ;
In her fancy's deep recesses
Felt she kindred's sweet caresses,
Scenes of verdant wildernesses
 Memory's glamour did invest.

Rumour spread of native lassie
Straying 'mid the gum trees massy,
Wandering o'er the mountains grassy,
 Searchers soon were on her track ;
And at last they found her lying
Starved and footsore, wasted, dying,
Uncomplaining, without crying,
 Radiance on her visage black.

Gently borne, her vision waning,
Speechless, hearing scarce remaining.
But her failing senses straining
 To fulfil her deep desires ;
She regards them rising, falling—
Whispers tender, lusty bawling,
Tilpa ! Tilpa ! calling, calling—
 Murmuring " Coming home " expires.

If the child comes glory-trailing,
Might not she when life was failing
Hear some heavenly voices hailing
 From the heights of Paradise,
See the angels' pinions gleaming
And the eternal rainbow beaming,
Round the throne the glories streaming
 That the home-sick soul entice ?

THE CALL OF HOME

("The Argus," 24 6/11)

About a year ago four adult aborigines were taken from Torrens Creek to the Barambah Mission Station. Three of them absconded, having only a tomahawk to procure food. Fearing recapture, they at first only travelled by night, hiding by day. They thus tramped 600 miles to their native place. Hopes are expressed that they will be allowed to remain there.

THE COMBAT

'Twas a lovely summer morning and the grass was
bathed with dew
And the green of every blade and leaf was washed a
silvery blue,
I was riding all alone and as I crossed a little hill
A noisy discord broke upon the air till then so still.

There was din of angry brawling and the thumps of
heavy fists
And a crowd of calm spectators watching the im-
promptu lists,
The tallest of the company, two men of giant mould,
Were belabouring one another or enlocked in crushing
hold.

Though a friend of peace and concord yet I watched
the petty war,
It was something fascinating to behold those fighters
spar,
No thought of fairness hampered in the wild, ignoble
strife,
They kicked and clawed atrociously as bent on taking life.

What a contrast to that morning with its air of Sabbath
calm,
Nothing short of sacrilegious were the sounds of wrath
and harm,
Passing strange that in Australia, in the most seclude
retreat,
There should rise the din of conflict, noise of victory
and defeat.

The beat of hoofs approaching filled the multitude with
fright,
And the combatants and backers scampered off in
anxious flight.
Had they been but aboriginals their brawl we might
excuse,
But those pugilistic natives were two old men kangaroos.

THE CHASE.

While riding up the gully that comes from the Yabber
scrub,
When just about the base of that round hill they call
the Knob,
Upon the track where many a time we've seen the
dingoes trot
We spied a yellow-brindled dog, and after him we shot.
He went apace, we stuck our spurs into our horses'
flanks,
And rushed with reckless haste along the thickly
timbered banks.
With foot secure our chargers sped, and with unerring
eye
Full many a treacherous stump and hole they bore us
safely by.
As close upon the fugitive, and closer still we pressed
The wily hound with foxy tricks to foil us did his best,
If once he leaped across the creek he did it times a score,
The horses warming to the work gained on him more
and more.
Now rattling o'er a fallen tree, its crumbling branches
crash,
Now winding mazy thickets through, 'mid rustling
boughs we dash,
Fire flashes from the milky quartz to the ring of glittering
feet
Which fall upon the lawny flats with dull and heavy
beat ;
But tripping where the bed-rock hides 'neath shallow
gravelly ground,
Re-echoes to the livelier tread a hollow, booming sound.

We splash through pools and bogging, toil through
spongy flats and damp.
Whir! see the crowd of frightened ducks rise from the
Wathom Swamp,
Astounded groups of kangaroos start from their shady
lair,
Confused and terror-struck they dance, unheeded how
or where.
On Namboor Namboor waters I had rounded many a
mob.
But never had I spurt like that which started at the
Knob.
'Twas hot work, I can tell you, for a tropic brightness
gleamed.
The sweat stood on our brow and from our steeds
in currents streamed,
A crimson patch upon each side the hard-pressed
creatures bore,
The clinking silver on our heels was grimed with
sweat and gore,
Along a woody sideling turned the tired and breathless
dog,
And for a moment dodged us springing o'er and o'er a
log,
Balked, baffled, hemmed about, and with the stockwhip
sorely lashed,
He down the steep, and after him we helter-skelter
dashed;
Stones clattered, clouds of dust flew up, and tufts of
grass were torn
And centaur-like through crackling brake the man and
horse were borne.
An ugly place is this to pass, close crowd the crooked
stems,

The limb o'erhanging menaces, the clump our passage
hems,

We are within ten yards of him, resolved to tread him
down,

When back he doubles like a hare to gain the ridge's
crown.

Young Jack led on at furious bat upon the hard-mouthed
grey,

Which, though the rein was handled well, the bit
would not obey ;

Defiantly his head he shook, he tossed his muzzle high,
His gaping mouth disdained the steel, and frantic was
his eye,

His twisted neck was stiff, he would not wheel but
straight tore on,

As well attempt to steer a ship with sail and rudder
gone.

A cry involuntary and a muffled, ominous thud,

One hesitates to look, and feels a curdling in the blood.

Alas! the beast has carried Jack below a leaning limb,
Woe, woe the day that we must ride with Death, the
hunter's grim.

That stroke it was the senseless wood upon a human
breast,

Suspense doth check our breath and hush our very heart
to rest.

He's off! Yet no! He's fallen flat the horses back
along

And slips beneath the branch which else him to the
dust had flung.

He rose up in his seat again, we hastened to his aid ;

Pale though his cheek and bruised his chest, he splendid
pluck displayed.

"Hit out, old boys, besides the shock I've only got a scratch,

I want the dingo's tail—hit out, we must the vermin catch."

We smiled and up the hill we turned, the exciting chase renewed,

Revengeful was the speed with which the quarry was pursued ;

The staggering trot was slackening, soon had we him at bay,

A stirrup was the weapon that despatched the worthless prey,

Our meagre spoil—a yellow tail, with which we cantered back,

A lasting trophy of that hunt. we handed it to Jack.

He kept it for an ornament to grace his slab-walled room,

Memento of that rapid run and the nearness of his doom.

On Namboor Namboor waters I have rounded many a mob,

But never had I spurt like that which started at the Knob.

THE CHINESE COOK.

(Tune "Kitty Jones.")

'Twas in a western Queensland town
 (The name I must not tell)
 A gruesome chance a confident
 Grass widower befel.
 As keeper of the public pound
 A leading place he took,
 The fame was spread of dogs he bred
 And of his Chinese cook.

His wife to rest from household cares
 Upon a visit went,
 So thereupon devolved on John
 Domestic management,
 Important in his power supreme
 He bakes and roasts and fries,
 Makes puddings sweet, but nought could beat
 His dainty flavoured pies.

At length the mistress home returned
 Her spirits blithe and gay,
 And with her brought a friend who thought
 To have a holiday.
 The husband being glad at heart
 Most kindly did them greet,
 His face the while beamed with a smile
 Resolving them to treat.

THE CHINESE COOK.

Oft had his wife upbraided him
For faulting food prepared,
So "Now" thought he "I'll let her see
How sumptuously I've fared."
He bade the cook go make a pie
Like those he used to eat,
And asked him softly by the by
"Have you sufficient meat?"

The Chinaman, though proud to hear
His master's eulogy
Upon his skill displayed so well
In pasty cookery,
Had but one answer to return
Which soon flew through the town,
He shook his head and smiled and said
"No puppy more sit down."

The truth upon the master's mind
Burst like a flash of light,
He seized celestial's long pig-tail
And dragged with all his might ;
And, when before the humpy door
He raised his heavy foot,
He then of course with all his force
Gave John a last salute.

Although to John had not been shown
The cause of this disgrace,
He sought no wage you may engage
But left the hateful place.

And to this day, as I've heard say,
He's ne'er been known to ply
His cooking trade nor has he made
Another puppy pie.

On entering the hut again
The master had his share
Of playful jest from wife and guest
About his horrid fare,
Of podgy pups and dainty pies
The sight he cannot brook,
And sore, they say, he rues the day
He hired the Chinese cook.

[The above was a ditty composed in my teens and sung in company in Queensland, in various places, three or four years before J. B. Stephens' first "Chinese Cook" was published in "The Australasian." The occasion of its composition was the appearance of a paragraph in a Brisbane newspaper giving an account of the event described in the song, as having occurred at Surat in the west of Queensland, the victim being the local poundkeeper.

Probably the same paragraph had inspired J. B. Stephens' ballad. The literary coincidence possesses some interest, which is a reason for including my "Chinese Cook" in this volume. I have made a few verbal changes. J.M.]

**To My Wife on the 21st Anniversary
of our Wedding-Day.**

With hearts in tune, your hand in mine,
 These one and twenty years
We two have trod in cloud and shine
 This vale misnamed of tears.

Although so many years have fled,
 Although so long the way,
Since you and I together wed
 It seems but yesterday.

For God has given what'er was meet
 In boons that came in showers ;
And love has made our union sweet
 And duty filled the hours.

And whatsoe'er the future brings
 We'll face without a fear,
Experience that is coming springs
 From roots already here.

The hand that led us still will lead
 And all our wants supply,
And joy will be the lovers' meed
 Until the day we die.

THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE.

Mount up, O man, with cautious tread,
 Make sure each foothold as you go,
 For though the light surrounds your head,
 In darkness failures sigh below.

The rungs that lift a man to fame
 When trusted most may sudden fail,
 The patron's grace, the crowd's acclaim
 Are changeful as the fitful gale.

The ebb succeeds the swelling tide,
 The greatest most decrease have borne,
 Let not your heart be puffed with pride,
 Success be ever lightly worn.

Hold—ever ready to let go,
 Prepared to sit upon the dust,
 Contented to abandon show,
 In quietness to eat your crust.

Do right for duty's sake, not praise,
 Fulfil a ministry of love,
 Rely on Him who righteous sways
 The universe, and look above.

Then, if there fall the staggering blow
 And, will you nill you, down you must,
 Displaced you triumph, for you know
 A secret peace, a scatheless trust.

THE POOL MIRROR.

What time in muddy pool a patch of blue,
Reflected from the dappled sky, we view,
And think, the petty, foul and trampled place
Can witness bear to clear, unfathomed space,
Can lift our thoughts to splendid orbs on high,
And to the Maker of the Earth and sky,—
Ah then we can perceive, howe'er depraved
The human heart, howe'er to sin enslaved,
The mind howe'er untutored and impure,
Ensnconced in ignorance howe'er obscure,
That mind doth still reflect its Maker's thought,
That erring heart, by duty urged, untaught,
Doth witness to the source from which are given
The soul and conscience:—God in holy heaven.

LOVE AND DEATH.

There came a rapping at the door
 And cries of "Open, let me in!"
 Love hugged more tightly than before
 Her darling, feeble, pale and thin.

The bolts were forced, and Love beheld
 A stranger, one of royal mien,
 His aspect, cold and stern, repelled,
 No pity in his face was seen.

"Go back!" she cried, "and I will pay
 For ransom all I have of gold."
 Unmoved, he silent held his way.
 Implacable, relentless, bold.

She seized his hands to force retreat,
 Her grasp, her tears, he both ignored.
 She sank in terror at his feet,
 And cried to Christ, "Have mercy, Lord!"

She lifted up her tear-dimmed eye;
 Upon his shoulder there was set
 The hand divine, and sweet and nigh
 The face of Heavenly Love was met.

Despair gave way to peace of mind,
 She kissed her darling child once more;
 Then, hopeful sad, she him resigned
 To God's dark angel, feared before.

AUTUMN LEAVES.

The autumn leaves in golden beauty dying
Are loosely clinging waiting their decay,
The fitful gusts through withering leafage sighing
With reckless touch sweep fluttering showers away.
As down they whirl their rustling is like crying,
Heart-piercing as a sound of human woe.
It makes me sad to see them lifeless lying
And trampled on, or tossing to and fro.

The quivering yellow leaf me symbolizes,
How little would release my earthly hold !
With every day there meet me new surprises
That prove how quick the green gives way to gold.
Cling tightly as I may, a blast uprises
That neither love of life nor strength withstands,
My grasp will loosen, vain are all disguises—
But I shall fall into my Father's hands.

LIMITATION.

With powers unproved, unfailed, the world unknown,
 For youth the future holds a promise vast,
 Yea boundless, but before the noon is passed
 Conviction comes of barriers that are thrown
 Across whatever path we seek to tread.
 The world declines to answer at our call,
 The body only bears a burden small,
 The faculties refuse of hardest head.
 Some, balked in effort, sink into despair,
 Perchance abhor and end the bounded life,
 Forgetful that its scope has chances rife,
 (The bounds acknowledged), much to do and dare.
 He who accepts his narrow sphere content,
 Intensely living, finds not life misspent.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

Of all the days that make the year
 The most renowned day
 Is that on which the Lord came here
 To house in human clay.

The Lord divine His state exchanged,
 Became a little child,
 That men, by sin from God estranged,
 Might all be reconciled.

The Father was not from the Son
 Disjoined by sterner mood,
 In love and pity both were one,
 Both infinitely good.

So when the Son by humble birth
 Appeared with men to dwell,
 The Father also stooped to earth
 IN CHRIST, Immanuel.

No wonder that the heavenly choir
 Their glory song did raise,
 Much marvel if we mortals tire
 Or fail in rendering praise.

With songs we should not rest content,
 But deeds with hymns unite,
 That strife may cease and foes relent,
 And love o'er-master spite.

Like Christ we should most freely give
 Whate'er we can bestow,
 That men may holier, happier live
 And earth more heavenly grow.

A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

We wish for a Happy New Year,
 But whence will the happiness spring ?
 It doth not at random appear,
 It is a most sensitive thing.

When only pursued for itself
 All capture it surely eludes,
 Whereas the uncatchable elf
 Unsought-for upon us intrudes.

It has no regard for a throne
 Or mansion with furniture rare,
 Preferring a moss-covered stone.
 A hut where the living is spare.

The hands that are eager employed
 In tasks which the indolent shirk,
 Discover surprised, overjoyed,
 That happiness meets them at work.

The minds that are occupied full
 Endeavouring to learn or to teach,
 Whom Nature provides with a school,
 Have happiness close to their reach.

The hearts that are honest and pure,
 From malice and jealousy free,
 For happiness act as a lure,
 With them it delighteth to be.

The folk who with freeness bestow,
 Will happiness round them create
 And back to their bosom will flow
 Reflected the coveted state.

SANS SOUCI.

Beside St. Elmo fortress
Upon a grassy mound
Two boys absorbed were playing
While seated on the ground.
Their clothes were cheap and ragged,
Their youthful feet were bare,
But hardy were their bodies
Their minds without a care.

They laughed, they sang, they jested,
At cards were eager players,
As rich without a farthing
As if the world were theirs.
Beneath them and around them
The bustling city stirred,
They glanced not at its pageants
Its sounds were all unheard.

Quoth I "Lads can you tell me"
(They turned on me their eyes)
"What winds along the corso
So slow and solemn-wise?"
"It is a funeral, Signor,"
The one politely said,
The other kept on shuffling
And dealt the cards and led.

They then forgot my presence,
Resumed their merry game,
'Twas sunset but they lingered
Until the darkness came.
'Mid poverty and sickness,
With funerals marching on,
With toil as hard as slavery
And warfare to be done,

They cared not for the morrow—
Those healthy, happy boys,
They lived but in the present,
Therein they found their joys.
To find pursuit congenial
And fix attention there,
This is a precious secret—
An antidote to care.

TO A ROSE

Grieve not sweet rose (if flowers can grieve)

Because I cut thee from thy stem ;

'Tis not from lust to spoil, believe,

For none would waste so fair a gem.

Unfolding, thou dost freely shed

Thy charms of hue and perfume blent,

Admirers linger at thy bed

And winged marauders haunt thy scent.

More high by far the service thine—

Transferred an invalid's room to grace—

Thy musk and crimson will combine

To cheer his heart and light his face.

Thy blush will brighten languid eyes,

Thy perfume will be medicine sweet,

And happy memories will arise

And hopefully the heart will beat.

Thou'lt speak of gardens, bracing air,

And sunny hours that come with Spring ;

And help to banish wrinkling care,

And ease the strain long trials bring.

Thou'lt speak of sympathy and love

And sacrifice for others' weal,

And raise a thought to One above

Who feels whate'er His children feel.

Thou'lt not refuse to pay the price—

Such duty must appeal to thee—

That as a pleasing sacrifice

Thy life and grace shall yielded be.

WATTLE BLOSSOM

Welcome wattle blossom,
 Badge of early Spring !
Worn when days of August
 More of sunshine bring;
Oft as we have seen you,
 Ever new you seem,
And we feel fresh rapture
 At your golden gleam.

Welcome wattle blossom
 With the milder air ;
Hope to pallid faces,
 Smiling you declare ;
Like the rainbow glowing
 As the storm departs,
Brighter hours you herald,
 Gladdening youthful hearts.

Welcome wattle blossom !
 What delight to view
Cyclists wheeling homeward,
 Decorate with you,
When they gather eager
 Where you blow so free,
While they pluck the flower
 May they spare the tree.

Welcome wattle blossom!

With the sunny blooms

We will deck our raiment

And adorn our rooms.

Pity! that unfolding

Hastens your decay,

Sad! that shedding perfume

You should waste away.

Welcome wattle blossom,

Sweet, but fading fast!

Emblem of earth's pleasures,

Culled and quickly past!

Lift our thoughts to heaven's

Amaranthine bowers:—

Joys that cannot perish,

Never-withering flowers.

A PRAYER FOR PEACE

When scorching gales do haste
And forest fires do waste,
When creeks are rushing wild in flood by
 tempests chased,
When dangers crowd and ills increase
Oh give us strength and give us peace.

When strong temptations woo
Or trials dire pursue,
When wrinkling care distresses us and
 grief loads too,
From sin and care and tears release,
Oh give us strength and give us peace.

When fell disease o'ertakes,
When us our strength forsakes,
When earth recedes and death of us his
 booty makes,
When heart's desires and friendships
 cease
Be Thou, O God, our rest and peace.

A BLACKBIRD IN AUSTRALIA

[Do : - . re | mi : so | mi : - | Hark the blackbird's lay |
 Cheerily from the tree ripples the melody.
 | Do : - . re | mi : so | mi : - |
 Hark the blackbird's lay |

Thou silver-throated immigrant
 A stranger, yet not feeling strange,
 Thou singest in thy chosen haunt
 The old song in a world of change.

There lurketh doubtless in that song
 Some traces of the northern life,
 Of friendship with the rustic throng,
 Of share in hardship, love and strife.

Perchance in bracing clime afar
 Thy sires did thrill mine at the plough
 Or cheered them striding forth to war
 Or smoothed the lines upon their brow.

The ancient pact let us restore.
 The past to me lives in thy song,
 The thoughts it stirred in days of yore
 Awake as stored in memory long.

Thou singest 'neath serener skies,
 I labour with reward more sure,
 The echoes of thy song up-rise
 In me and will with mine endure.

With impulse high, with rapturous thought,
 A note like thine (response to thine)
 May those inspire who yet are not,
 Our influence thus shall intertwine.

[Do : - . re | mi : so | mi : - | Hark the blackbird's lay !
 Cheerily from the tree ripples the melody.
 | Do : - . re | mi : so | mi : - |
 Hark the blackbird's lay !

DETACHMENT.

We live too fast, like hunters in the chase
 We heedless rush, yet when the quarry's caught
 (If caught it be,) despite the killing pace,
 We oft-times find its value next to naught.
 We lose our judgment with so little cause
 Discerning not the trivial bauble sought.
 How welcome for our minds and lives a pause—
 A little pause for quiet earnest thought.

We fret too much and at the future quail
 And waste our strength by adding care to care.
 If we but knew one whit 'twould not avail,
 Such anxious brooding we would gladly spare.
 Our spirit-breaking worry brings no gains
 And hampers when we need to strive and dare.
 'Twould save us many doubts and fears and pains—
 A little time for heart-refreshing prayer.

We prize too high the profits and the joys
 We hope to win (or sorrow to have lost.)
 We covet, then despise and break our toys,
 The unattained and novel valued most.
 When disappointment gnaws, when doubts annoy,
 When prized possessions crumble into dust,
 The wise such discipline as means employ
 To world-alooftness and more Godward trust.

LOVE CREATES LOVE

A mavis sang near my window
In the closing days of Spring,
I joyed to watch its rapture
As it made the garden ring.
And on through the months of Summer
It cheered me with its lay,
It seemed to know I was listening
To the message it would convey.

And this is the song it was singing
When it bade me a last adieu,
"You have given me a daily welcome
And I've sung my best for you.
There's not a living creature
Among angels, beasts or men
But yearns for love and can have it,
If you love, you'll be loved again."

A NATIONAL HYMN

O God, who dost their bounds ordain
To nations as they rise and fall,
We praise thee for our vast domain
Not won by war—a spoil to call—
But as a precious trust bestowed
To hold and use for our abode.

O Lord of lords Australia crown
With freedom, peace, and fair renown,
When danger threatens on our coast
Be Thou the Captain of our Host.

May hope and courage nerve our hearts
For boldest task and noblest aim,
May science nurse the peaceful arts
And wisdom light the path to fame.
By godly fear may lives be pure
And justice, mercy, truth endure.

Oh bless the homesteads thinly strown
And toilers brave on land and sea,
Where'er our starry flag is flown
May duty aye the watchword be.
God save the King, our rulers guide,
And prosper Britain's empire wide.

NIGHT AND SLEEP.

What is night? 'Tis but a shadow
 Starry deeps that doth reveal,
Worlds disclosing which the sunlight
 Strangely serveth to conceal.
What is death? A shadow likewise,
 State—a fuller life to see,
Hour of bursting fleshly fetters,
 Gate to depths of mystery.

What is sleep? A brief forgetting,
 Swift restorer of our strength,
Prophecy of final slumber,
 That awaiteth all at length.
What is death? A vision closing,
 On the earth and scenes confined,
After peace and brief reposing,
 Scenes ineffable to find.

A PRAYER.

What shall I pray for ? Pray that you may know
The work that God has set you here below,
That with the highest skill you can command
You may perform all labour of your hand,
That chances as they come you may discern,
And how to seize and best employ them learn,
That you may life esteem a priceless gift,
Which sure, irrevocably slippeth swift,
That you may always have a friend to love
And his or her affection constant prove,
That when at last you cast your memory back
Fair flowers from seeds you've sown may strew **your**
track,
That when you fall asleep at setting sun
The morn may bring a "Welcome" and "Well done."

THE RIGHT TO LIVE.

Have I the rights a man should have
 Who God ordaineth to be born ?
 Did God design me for a slave
 My hopes imprisoned in a grave
 Upon my natal morn ?

Luxurious life I can disdain
 And every selfish, pampering art,
 But must my high resolves be slain,
 Must aspirations rise in vain
 As foreign to my heart ?

To ease I would not dream aspire
 It saps the spirit, dulls the brain ;
 But toil productive I desire,
 And scope for faculty require
 And labour's righteous gain.

I covet not the mansion grand,
 The miser's hoard or acres broad,
 I claim a birthright in the land—
 For work, a roof and bread at hand—
 Life pledges this from God.

FACING DEATH.

There is an hour which God hath set
When every life of days or years
Worn to a flimsy, trembling thread,
Shall shuddering feel the fatal shears.

I too must lie upon my bed
In helpless weakness and in pain,
And face th' inevitable gate
Which entered ne'er lets back again.

They'll gaze in pity on my face
Wrinkled and wan and wasted thin,
Not all the wish of all earth's love
Can keep the flickering soul-light in.

I may be loth to leave life's work,
To lose its joys my heart may weep.
Not all the stir and hopes of earth
Will rouse me from that final sleep.

I love the earth, it is no sin,
For God has made it good and fair,
To know its wealth I but begin,
To see and lose, a mockery were.

One glance upon the boundless realm
Of knowledge, then eternal night!
To promise, only to deceive
Would be like tantalizing spite.

No! I can trust instinctive hope,
And trust th' eternal fount of love;
I trow that death brings boundless scope
To love and learn in heaven above.

I'll do the duty of the hour
And look at death without dismay,
A momentary darkness dense,
And then—the sheen of endless day.



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